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Middle East
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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Sudan

Outlook for Numayri

President Numayri came out of the September 5 coup attempt with his position strengthened, according to a recent assessment by the US embassy in Khartoum.

Numayri is likely to rely increasingly on former military associates whom he appointed to senior positions in government and on strongmen in the politburo of the Sudanese Socialist Union, who rallied behind him during the brief coup episode. Although he will use his newly legislated internal security powers to further neutralize anti-regime elements--including communists, Muslim extremists, and Khartoum University students--the embassy does not believe Sudan is likely to become a harsh police state.

The government will be in no hurry to reopen the university, which has long been a thorn in Numayri's side. By tying student and faculty activity to the abortive attempt to oust him--little evidence has been offered to substantiate this charge--Numayri has an excuse to silence the only remaining forum in Khartoum for anti-regime activity.

Numayri's continuation in office should ensure that relations between Arab northerners and Black southerners will remain on an even keel. Many southerners believe Numayri is their best guarantee for the perpetuation of regional autonomy.

In foreign relations, Sudan is likely to continue its efforts to forge closer ties with moderate Arab states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia (CONFIDENTIAL)



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Republic of Maldives

Status Report

President Ibrahim Nasir has succeeded in reinforcing his paramount position since he dismissed Ahmad Zaki from the prime ministership last March and imposed presidential rule on this tiny Indian Ocean archipelago. Nasir has transformed several ministries into departments under the presidency and has personally taken charge of two of them--external affairs and education. Zaki, whose prestige was clearly growing at the time of his ouster, remains in prison.

Britain's decision to close down its airforce staging base on Gan Island--in the Maldives' southernmost atoll--and turn over the complex to the Maldivians will have a major impact on the republic's foreign relations. Negotiations on the British withdrawal are nearing completion. The British plan to end operations through Gan on December 31 and to remove all their personnel by next April. The Maldivians apparently do not plan to use Gan as an airfield and may dismantle and move some of the facilities to other islands. The departure of the British will end both a century of UK influence in the islands and the only close political link the Maldives have with a foreign power.

Since the British announced about a year ago their intention to withdraw from Gan, the tempo of official visits to the islands from other countries has increased. The Indians and the Pakistanis have been the most active. Each country wants to ensure that no other nation takes up where the British leave off.

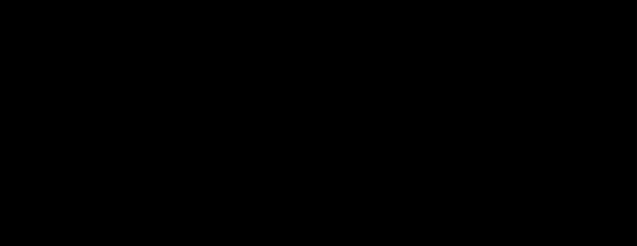
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The Maldivians, for their part, apparently want to establish contacts with as many countries as possible. To this end, the government is seeking private investments and aid from a variety of sources, including France and Iran. In at least one case the Maldivian desire for wider diplomatic contacts has been thwarted by external pressure. Last April the government of the heavily Muslim country broke relations with Israel in response to Arab threats to boycott the 46-ship Maldivian merchant fleet, which is active in the Persian Gulf. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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Chad-France

Relations Strained

143 Paris has agreed to the Chadian government's request that the 2,000 French troops in Chad be withdrawn by the end of this month. French troops have been stationed in Chad under defense accords that were negotiated when Chad became independent in 1960. The military regime in Ndjamena requested the withdrawal to demonstrate its displeasure over France's recent direct dealings with tribal rebels in northern Chad aimed at securing the release of a French woman held hostage by the rebels since April 1974.

25X1A 1 A French foreign ministry official has tried to play down the significance of this latest irritant in Franco-Chadian relations. In a conversation with a US embassy officer, the French official dismissed the episode as a transitory difficulty that would probably fade away when Chadian leaders realized that they have no other place to turn for essential aid. He noted that Chad had not requested the withdrawal of the 300 French technical advisers assigned to the Chadian army.

25X1A 2B Nevertheless, Chadian President Malloum is now casting about for alternative sources of military assistance. Chad's minister of finance is currently visiting Moscow and several East European countries seeking military aid. Soviet embassy officials in Chad have [REDACTED] expressed satisfaction with Malloum's regime, which took over in a coup last April, and Moscow may respond favorably to Chad's request. Soviet activities in Chad since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1964 have focused largely on technical assistance and cultural programs. Malloum has unsuccessfully requested military assistance from the US and may now try to approach other Western countries for aid as well. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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